

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 MCT-01 SIL-01 LAB-04
DHA-02 /086 W

-----080806Z 110525 /16

R 080615Z JUN 77
FM AMCONSUL MILAN
TO AMEMBASSY ROME
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5420

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MILAN 0995

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, PINT, PGOV, IT
SUBJECT: CABLE FROM COMO

BEGIN SUMMARY - OMO IN MIDST CITY CRISIS AS PCI AND PSI
PRESS FOR COMMUNIST INCLUSION IN GOVERNING MAJORITY ALONG
PATTER LOMBARDY REGION. WHILE ECONOMIC SITUATION VERY
GOOD, ALL SOURCES REPORT SIGNS OF TURN DOWN. DC, HELPED BY
PERFORMANCE OF ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT, APPEARS TO BE IMPROVING
POSITION WHILE PSI WEAK. COMMUNISTS SAID TO BE UNDERGOING
MAJOR CHANGE. PUBLIC ORDER MAJOR PREOCCUPATION FOR DESPITE
END TO BANK ROBBERIES AND NO SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL TERRORISM,
COMO HAS BEEN HIT BY FIVE KIDNAPPINGS THIS YEAR. POLICE
HAVE CAUGHT KIDNAPPERS IN FOUR CASES BUT FIFTH VICTIM REMAINS
UNRETURNED AND CASE UNSOLVED.END SUMMARY

1. CONGEN VISITED COMO , AN HOUR FROM MILAN, JUNE 7 AND INTERVIEWED
PREFECT, POLICE CHIEF, CISL OFFICIALS, DC MAYOR AND DC PARTY
SECRETARY, PSI SECRETARY AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS, PRESIDENT
AND OFFICIAL INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION AS WELL AS LEADER OF PACE
SETTING SILK INDUSTRY.

2. DURING PAST FEW DAYS CITY EXECUTIVE AT STANDSTILL AS
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RESULT OF PCI REQUEST FOR GREATER ROLE IN CITY GOVERNMENT.
PSI, WHICH WITH DC AND PSDI FORM CITY MAJORITY, BACKED PCI
AND PARTIES NOW WRESTLING WITH PROBLEM. BRIGHT, YOUNG, DC
MAYOR SURPRISED AND DEPRESSED BY PSI DECISION. HE CONTENTED
CITY HAD NO REAL PROBLEMS BEYOND POLITICAL JOCKEYING. COMO
IS WEALTHY, WELL RUN AND ONE OF RARE CITIES OPERATING IN
BLACK. DC HAS 18 OF 40 CITY COUNCIL SEATS AND DID VERY WELL

IN JUNE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS. PCI HAS ONLY NINE SEATS BUT GAINED SHARPLY WHILE PSI DROPPED AND HOLDS CRUCIAL FIVE SEATS.

3. NEXT SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL TEST WILL COME JUNE 12 WHEN WARD COUNCILS WILL BE ELECTED. IF TURN OUT EQUALS 80 PERCENT OR MORE, LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE IT WILL BE ACCURATE MEASURE LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARD PARTIES.

4. DC LOOKS AND ACTS CONFIDENT. PROVINCIAL SECRETARY IS YOUNG, LEFT WING AND NEW TO JOB. MAYOR IS OLDER EXPERIENCED LAWYER WITH DIRECT, COMPETENT APPROACH. BOTH AGREE THAT LOCAL DC GAINING GROUND WITH INCREASED NUMBER VOLUNTEERS AND BENEFITING FROM IMPROVED DC IMAGE IN ROME. THIS IS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO COMPLAINTS ABOUT PERFORMANCE OF ROME LEADERS HEARD FROM COMO DC BEFORE ELECTIONS. MAYOR LAMENTS ABSENCE OF COMUNIONE AND LIBERAZIONE GROUP WHICH HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN NEARBY LECCO AND IS ONLY DC ORGANIZATION ABLE APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE. WHILE DC LEADERS BEMOANED PSI RADICALISM AND SAID IT MUCH EASIER WORKING WITH COMMUNISTS, THEY DENY THAT THEY WILL SUCCUMB TO THIS TEMPTATION.

5. SOCIALISTS DOWNCAST BY JUNE 76 ELECTION SETBACK AND SAY ERRORS IN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COST THEM DEARLY. COMO FEDERATION'S SUPPORT FOR DRAWING PCI INTO RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT SEEMS UNDIMINISHED. WHILE YOUNG PROVINCIAL SECRETARY AND MP FERRARI ARE NOT IMPRESSIVE, PARTY WORKER FROM PLANT LEVEL CERTAINLY WAS. A REMARKABLE MARXIST IDEOLOGIST, LATTER REPORTED MAJOR CHANGE IN PCI LOCALLY. HE CLAIMS THAT PARTY CONFIDENTIAL

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INDOCTRINATION OF YOUNG IS TOTAL DEPARTURE FROM MARXIST-LENINISM AND IN SHARP CONTRAST TO PREVIOUS APPROACH. HE ARGUES THAT YOUNGER GENERATION IS LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC IN ORIENTATION AND INCREASINGLY DIVIDED FROM OLDER PARTY LEADERSHIP. IN SUM, COMO SOCIALISTS FAR FROM PRO-PCI, BELIEVE THAT PROCESS OF BREAKING PCI AWAY FROM SOVIET UNION AND CHANGING AUTHORITARIAN CHARACTER OF PARTY IN FULL SWING, AND SAY THAT SOCIALIST ROLE IN PROCESS ESSENTIAL EVEN IF END RESULT IS EVENTUAL DISAPPEARANCE OF PPSI BECAUSE PCI HAS BECOME SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC.

6. SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OCCURRING WITHIN PCI REPORTED BY DC SECRETARY AS WELL WHO CLAIMED TO BE ABLE DISTINGUISH THREE FAIRLY PERSISTENT FACTIONS - A TOTAL INNOVATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MILAN 0995

7. TERRORISM MAJOR CONCERN. PREFECT AND POLICE CHIEF
POINT TO CONSTANTLY CHANGING ALLIANCES OF UNDERWORLD
TO CARRY OUT KIDNAPPINGS. SOCIALISTS MORE CONCERNED WITH
POLITICAL TERRORISM THAT THEY BLAME ON DC. SUCH VIOLENCE SO
FAR ABSENT IN COMO WHILE KIDNAPPINGS ON INCREASE.

8. COMO ECONOMIC SITUATION EXCELLENT IN 1976 AND FIRST
QUARTER 1977. NOW, HOWEVER, ALL SEEM TO SEE EVIDENCE OF
TURN DOWN LATER IN YEAR. TEXTILES, WHICH VERY IMPORTANT,
HAVE HAD DROP IN ORDERS AND WHILE MOST PLANTS STILL WORKING
AT FULL STEAM, THERE IS INCREASE IN UNCERTAINTY. (IMPORTANT TO NOTE,
HOWEVER, THAT OUR ITALIAN CONTACTS ALMOST INVARIABLE EXPECT
DISASTER AROUND THE CORNER AND FREQUENTLY REPORT LAST YEAR
TO HAVE BEEN BETTER THAN JUDGED AT THE TIME.)

9. RANCO SITUATION SEEMS TO MAKE ALL HAPPY. THIS US-OWNED
FIRM HAD CLOSED PLANT AND FIRED SOME 800 EMPLOYEES IN
1975. AFTER CONSULATE, PREFECT AND EMPLOYERS WENT
TO WORK ON UNIONS, PSI AND RANCO US MANAGEMENT, COMPROMISE
WAS FOUND ENABLING PLANT TO REOPEN AND NOW UNIONS, PREFECT
AND INDUSTRIALISTS SAY ALL IS FINE WITH MUCH IMPROVED
LABOR/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS.

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10. CISL AND OTHERS POINTED TO PHENOMENON THAT UNIONS AND
LEFT WING PARTIES DEEPLY OPPOSE BUT THAT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT
HARBINGER. COMO STATISTICS SHOW THAT IN LARGE PLANTS, SIZE
OF LABOR FORCE IS IN SHARP DECLINE. AT SAME TIME NUMBER OF

SMALL, ARTISAN AND HOME PRODUCERS INCREASING. THIS DISMAYS
UNIONS WHO CLAIM IT IS TACTIC BY EMPLOYERS TO ESCAPE UNION
WAGES, SOCIAL SECURITY, TAXES AND HEALTH/SAFETY REGULATIONS.

11. THESE ARE CERTAINLY MOTIVES FOR FARMING OUT WORK BUT SO
IS DESIRE ESCAPE UNION POWER TO CONTROL LABOR FOR BARGAINING
AND TO ESCAPE BURDEN OF ABSENTEEISM BY SUB-CONTRACTING.
WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE RESOURCES TO MAKE ADEQUATE STUDY OF
PHENOMEN, IT WOULD APPEAR FAIRLY WIDESPREAD IN NORTHERN ITALY
AND COULD HAVE IMPORTANT POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IF IT TAKES
HOLD.

12. AT EVERY TURN CARTER ADMINISTRATION GIVEN FRIENDLY
RECEPTION, INCLUDING BY SOCIALISTS, WITH PARTICULAR PRAISE
FOR SPEAKING UP IN DEFENSE HUMAN RIGHTS.

13. COMO, IN SHORT, IS PROSPEROUS, BUSY, OUT OF THE
MALESTROM OF URBAN VIOLENCE AND COPING.FINA

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